

and worked with Congress to secure Trade Promotion Authority. Bob and his team have completed free trade agreements with 12 nations on 5 continents, that will open a combined market of 124 million consumers for America's farmers, manufacturers, and small-business owners. I appreciate his fine service, and I will continue to count on his wisdom and good judgment in his new post as Deputy Secretary of State.

When he is confirmed by the Senate, Rob Portman will build on Ambassador Zoellick's achievements. I've asked him to take on a bold agenda. We need to continue to open markets abroad by pursuing bilateral free trade agreements with partners around the world. We need to finish our work to establish a Free Trade Area of the Americas, which will become the largest free trade zone in the world. We need to complete the Doha Round negotiations within the World Trade Organization, to reduce global barriers to trade. We must continue to vigorously enforce the trade laws on the books so that American businesses and workers are competing on a level playing field.

Rob is the right man to carry out this agenda. I've known him for many years. He is a good friend, a decent man, and a skilled negotiator. He understands that trade creates jobs, raises living standards, and lowers prices for families here at home. Rob also understands that as the world trades more freely, it becomes more free and prosperity abounds.

Rob Portman will be a fine leader for the dedicated men and women who work in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. I'm grateful he's agreed to serve. I'm grateful to his wife, Jane, and their three children, Jed, Will, and Sally. I urge the Senate to promptly confirm this outstanding nominee as America's Trade Representative, and I look forward to welcoming Rob into my Cabinet.

Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:36 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Representative Portman. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## **Remarks at a Saint Patrick's Day Shamrock Presentation Ceremony With Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland**

*March 17, 2005*

*Taoiseach*, thank you very much, and welcome back to the White House. It's—Laura and I are delighted to continue the tradition of accepting the crystal bowl overflowing with shamrocks. It's a wonderful gift symbolizing Ireland's world-renowned hospitality.

Today is a joyous celebration of the deep friendship between the Irish and the American peoples. The histories and bloodlines of our two countries are deeply intertwined. And that is why, in cities and towns across our Nation, millions of Americans celebrate this feast day of the Apostle of Ireland.

Saint Patrick used the three leaves of the shamrock to illustrate the mystery of the Trinity. The shamrock has also come to represent the unity that people can achieve when they commit themselves to peace and freedom.

In America, we have a phrase for that—it's called *e pluribus unum*, out of many, one. You'll find that on the Great Seal of the United States, which, by the way, was largely designed by Charles Thompson, a native of Derry.

The hearts of the Irish burn for freedom, and they brought that love for liberty with them to America. The Irish fought in our Nation's War of Independence, and over the past two centuries, they devoted their blood and sweat to defending and building America. When terrorists struck our Nation, the Irish were well-represented among the firefighters and police officers who sacrificed their lives to save others at the World Trade Center. In a great Irish tradition, marines preparing to retake the city of Fallujah prepared for battle to the strains of Lieutenant Colonel Paul Sweeney's bagpipes echoing across the Iraqi plains.

The Irish have a way of turning adversity into opportunity. About a million came to our shores seeking refuge from the great potato famine. Once they came, they built, and they toiled, and they produced. They constructed railroads and great cathedrals. They even helped build the U.S. Capitol. They added

to our literature with a genius, with their words. And, of course, a few even entered politics. *[Laughter]*

The Irish talent for statesmanship has been evident on both sides of the Atlantic. And today we're proud to welcome a friend of peace and a friend of freedom, my good friend Bertie Ahern.

Mr. Prime Minister, I want to thank you for your tireless work in the struggle against terrorism on Saint Patrick's Island. I appreciate your leadership. I appreciate your strength of character. I appreciate your vision. It takes courage to work the path—to walk the path of peace. And your leadership, Mr. Prime Minister, is appreciated not only in your nation but in ours as well. As you work for peace, our Government and the American people will stand with you.

Today, America and Ireland are united in many ways. The economies of our two countries are closely tied. We're working together to bring freedom and justice to Afghanistan and the Balkans and other countries that have not known it. We share a common commitment to the values preached by Saint Patrick: Liberty under God and the dignity of all human persons.

*Taoiseach*, we pay tribute to the role the Irish have played in defending and renewing the ideals that Americans cherish. May our friendship remain steadfast, and may the citizens of both our nations enjoy a happy and blessed Saint Patrick's Day. Welcome back.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Ahern.

### **Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Legislation**

*March 17, 2005*

I applaud the House for passing a budget that protects America, promotes economic growth, supports our priorities, and keeps us on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. It closely follows my budget proposal and reflects our shared commitment to be wise with

the people's money and restrain spending in Washington, DC.

### **Statement on the Terri Schiavo Case**

*March 17, 2005*

The case of Terri Schiavo raises complex issues. Yet in instances like this one, where there are serious questions and substantial doubts, our society, our laws, and our courts should have a presumption in favor of life. Those who live at the mercy of others deserve our special care and concern. It should be our goal as a nation to build a culture of life, where all Americans are valued, welcomed, and protected—and that culture of life must extend to individuals with disabilities.

### **Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Pensacola, Florida**

*March 18, 2005*

**The President.** Thank you, Governor. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. I am glad to be back under better circumstances. It was my honor to come and represent our Government during what was a terrible tragedy, and that was Hurricane Ivan. I want to thank the mayors of the communities here. I want to thank the base commanders. I want to thank people responsible for helping people get their lives back in order.

I still saw a lot of blue roofs flying in. So I know there's still a lot of work to do. But I—it was such an honor to work with Jeb and Congressman Miller and members of the delegation and the mayors to try to do our duty to get resources to people who need help. And so I want to congratulate the stalwart citizens of this part of the world. I was struck by the devastation. I was pleased by the sense of spirit when we came down here, a spirit that has been manifested in what is obviously an ongoing recovery. But we're still paying attention to you. And again, I want to thank you for your courage.

Before I talk about a big issue, I've got some other things to say. They used to say, "Well, you know, he's got his daddy's eyes